



## COVID-19 FUNDS USED TO PROMOTE CRITICAL RACE THEORY

During the pandemic, the federal government supplied billions of dollars to assist schools in mitigating the impacts of COVID-19. The Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund was established on March 27, 2020 as a part of the Coronavirus Aid Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act.<sup>1</sup> After the passage of all three COVID-19 relief bills, a total of \$190 billion was allocated to K-12 schools—over 4 times the amount provided in a typical year.<sup>2</sup> While these funds were used by some schools as Congress intended, which was to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 and address learning loss with summer school and tutoring, others used these funds to advance Critical Race Theory (CRT).<sup>3</sup>

CRT is a damaging ideology that views others based foremost on the color of their skin. Promoters of the ideology often use terms like equity, anti-racism, and diversity training to soften the language promoting this radical, racist ideology.<sup>4</sup> (*Read more in RPC's brief entitled "Critical Race Theory: What You Need to Know."*)<sup>5</sup>

- **Equity**—Rather than advocating for equality, which means equal treatment under the law, CRT advocates use equity as a way to promote equal outcomes across all racial groups.<sup>6</sup> In practice, equity leads to race-based discrimination.<sup>7</sup> As Vice President Harris explained, "Equitable treatment means we all end up at the same place."<sup>8</sup> CRT theorists teach that it is "dangerous" to treat people equally without considering their race.<sup>9</sup>
- **Anti-racism**—This term is used by CRT teachers to describe actions that lead to equal outcomes in all racial groups, even if it means discrimination. It assumes that society is systematically racist and the only solution is new discrimination.<sup>10</sup> One CRT leader, Ibram X. Kendi, summarizes anti-racism by saying, "If discrimination is creating equity, then it is antiracist. If discrimination is creating inequity, then it is racist."<sup>11</sup>
- **Diversity training**—This training is used to teach people to view and understand others primarily as members of a specific race or culture group. Though training teachers to be considerate of other's differences may be helpful, CRT has come to distort this training into a lesson about viewing everyone through a lens of race.<sup>12</sup>

Some schools used their COVID-19 funding to promote these CRT ideas under a guise of managing the pandemic crisis. For example:

- The Virginia Board of Education reported that their COVID-19 funds were used in part to support Virginia's "Road Map to Equity."<sup>13</sup> This Virginia plan promises to "advance" racial equity and hold a "commitment to the principles of anti-racism."<sup>14</sup>
- In Massachusetts, the school board reported that "anti-racism training" and plans for increasing equity were part of their efforts to support students during COVID-19.<sup>15</sup>
- The Board of School Directors in Milwaukee detailed their plan to use \$100,000 of COVID funds on "Anti-Racism and Bias Professional Development."<sup>16</sup>
- Nevada's plans submitted to the U.S. Department of Education stated COVID-19 funds would be used to provide equity and diversity training for all school staff.<sup>17</sup>
- Corning-Painted Post School District in New York already committed \$130,000 of their COVID relief funds to a contract with the Equity Collaborative, a group known for their teaching of the "5 Tenets of CRT."<sup>18</sup>

Given these examples, taxpayer funding intended to help schools manage the pandemic crisis is instead being used to directly teach the un-American tenants of CRT. Congress should conduct proper oversight to ensure that taxpayer dollars are used solely for the purpose for which they were allocated.

<sup>1</sup> “Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund.” Office of Elementary and Secondary Education. September 13, 2021. <https://oese.ed.gov/offices/education-stabilization-fund/elementary-secondary-school-emergency-relief-fund/>

<sup>2</sup> “Look Up How Much COVID Relief Aid Your School District is Getting.” Education Week. September 10, 2021.

<https://www.edweek.org/policy-politics/look-up-how-much-covid-relief-aid-your-district-is-getting/2021/09#:~:text=Since%20March%202020%2C%20the%20federal,schools%20in%20a%20typical%20year.>

<sup>3</sup> Turner, Cory. “Schools Are Getting Billions in COVID Relief Money. Here’s How They Plan to Spend it.” National Public Radio. September 1, 2021. <https://www.npr.org/2021/09/01/1033213936/survey-school-superintendents-federal-covid-relief-money-spending> and Rosiak, Luke. “Schools Got \$130B To Re-Open. Some of It Went to CRT. Now Many are Closed.” Daily Wire. January 4, 2022. <https://www.dailywire.com/news/schools-got-130b-to-re-open-some-of-it-went-to-crt-now-many-are-closed>

<sup>4</sup> “Glossary of CRT-Related Terms.” Center for Renewing America. September 23, 2021. <https://americarenewing.com/issues/glossary-of-crt-related-terms/>

<sup>5</sup> “Critical Race Theory: What You Need to Know.” Republican Policy Committee. August 21, 2021.

[https://republicanpolicy.house.gov/sites/evo-subsites/republicanpolicy.house.gov/files/evo-media-document/Critical%20Race%20Theory\\_0.pdf](https://republicanpolicy.house.gov/sites/evo-subsites/republicanpolicy.house.gov/files/evo-media-document/Critical%20Race%20Theory_0.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> “Glossary of CRT-Related Terms.” Center for Renewing America. September 23, 2021. <https://americarenewing.com/issues/glossary-of-crt-related-terms/>

<sup>7</sup> “How to Identify Critical Race Theory.” Heritage Foundation. <https://www.heritage.org/civil-society/heritage-explains/how-identify-critical-race-theory>

<sup>8</sup> “Equity” Kamala Harris on Facebook. <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=1731574083660306>

<sup>9</sup> Eden, Max. “Ban critical race theory now.” American Enterprise Institute. May 5, 2021. <https://www.aei.org/op-eds/ban-critical-race-theory-now/>

<sup>10</sup> “Glossary of CRT-Related Terms.” Center for Renewing America. September 23, 2021. <https://americarenewing.com/issues/glossary-of-crt-related-terms/>

<sup>11</sup> Id.

<sup>12</sup> Id.

<sup>13</sup> “State Plan for the American Rescue Plan Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund.” Virginia Department of Education submitted to U.S. Department of Education. April 21, 2021. <https://oese.ed.gov/files/2021/09/Virginia-ARP-ESSER-State-Plan.pdf>

<sup>14</sup> “Navigating EdEquityVA.” Virginia Department of Education. <https://www.doe.virginia.gov/edequityva/navigating-equity-book.pdf>

<sup>15</sup> “State Plan for the American Rescue Plan Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund.” Massachusetts Department of Education submitted to U.S. Department of Education. April 21, 2021. <https://oese.ed.gov/files/2021/07/Massachusetts-ARP-ESSER-State-Plan-Final.pdf>

<sup>16</sup> “ESSER III- Updated Budget Detail.” Milwaukee Public Schools. October 14, 2021. <https://mps.milwaukee.k12.wi.us/MPS-English/CFO/ESSER/ESSER-III-Booklet/ESSERIIIUpdatedProposedDraftBudgetDetail-revised10.12.21.pdf>

<sup>17</sup> “State Plan for the American Rescue Plan Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund.” Nevada Department of Education submitted to U.S. Department of Education. July 9, 2021. <https://oese.ed.gov/files/2021/07/Nevada-ARP-ESSER-State-Plan.pdf>

<sup>18</sup> Almanzan, Jamie; Meyer, Graig; and Johnson, Aaron. “The equity collaborative.” May 7, 2020. <https://theequitycollaborative.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Intro-To-Critical-Race-Theory.pdf> and “Corning City School District ARP-ESSER Application.” Approved November 22, 2021. <https://www.corningareaschools.com/docs/district/Corning%20ARP%20ESSER-2%20Full%20Application%20APPROVED.pdf>